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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Letter dated 6 April 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Kindly find enclosed* the statement issued by the Ministry of External Relations of the Republic of the Sudan concerning the heinous crime committed by the rebel movement SPLM/A (John Garang faction) which have executed four Sudanese captives, who were detained while on a humanitarian mission for the ICRC, accompanying two officers of the ICRC (Swiss nationals).

I trust that you share with us the indignation for such a horrible crime which contravenes the Geneva Conventions, the Rome Agreement of 18 November 1998 between the Government of the Sudan and the rebels on security and guarantee of the safety of humanitarian relief workers, and the relevant human rights instruments.

This further testifies to the disrespect by this group of accepted norms and rules and to an irresponsible pattern of behaviour for which they should be brought to account by the international community.

I kindly request that the statement be circulated to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights under item 9.

(Signed) Ibrahim Mirghain IBRAHIM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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* The annex is reproduced as received in the language of submission only.

Annex

REPUBLIC
of the SUDAN

Permanent Mission to U.N. Office
GENEVA

47, AVENUE BLANC
1202 GENÈVE
CASE POSTALE 335
CH-1211 GENÈVE 19
TEL.: (022) 731 29 66 / 63
TELEX: 414 124 SUDN CH
FAX: (022) 731 29 56

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جنيف
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STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN ON THE EXECUTION OF FOUR CAPTIVES BY THE REBEL MOVEMENT IN SOUTHERN SUDAN KHARTOUM, 4/APRIL/1999.

In a most barbaric act, the rebel movement (SPLM/A- Garang Faction) have executed the four Sudanese captives who have been abducted in Fariyang area, in Wahda state in southern Sudan on 18 February 1999. The four Sudanese, who represent local state authorities, dignitaries and the Sudanese Red Crescent were on a relief mission of the ICRC together with two Swiss nationals. The latter were released by the rebels on 13th March, in a discriminatory manner. The ICRC issued a statement in which it expressed its shock at the news of the death of the four Sudanese nationals. It demanded a full inquiry to shed light on the events and the full cooperation of the SPLM/A and the repatriation of the four bodies to allow for a decent burial.

The Government of the Sudan strongly denounces this heinous act by the rebel movement which represents total disrgard to the sanctity and the principles of internationally recognized norms of behavior. This incident is a clear indication of the rebel movement's persistent pattern of crimes against innocent people and humanity. It reflects the irresponsible behaviour, and indeed the devious mentality of the rebels.

It was only last year that the SPLM has, in cold blood, murdered 3 Sudanese relief workers affiliated with international relief organizations in Kadugli area.

It further used food as a weapon against children, women and the elderly in areas under its control by diverting food and medicine supplies to its own forces during last years' food crisis in Bahr Alghazal.

These atrocities were confirmed by the UN investigation team and the recent report of Medcines San Frontiers (France) and the statements made by the Archbishop of Rombiek. This incident is a clear evidence of the SPLM's disrespect of humanitarian activities and its hampering of the movement of humanitarian relief workers. The ruthless killing of the Sudanese captives adds, yet, to the black record of the SPLM, another heinous crime prohibited by the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Prisoners of War. This horrible crime contravenes the Rome Agreement signed under the auspices of the UN in November 1998 within the framework of the joint technical committee for humanitarian affairs between the Government of the Sudan and the rebel movement. The said agreement, clearly stipulates in its annexed protocol on security, the guarantee of the safety of humanitarian relief workers. This abhorrent incident seriously casts doubt on the worthiness of any understanding or agreement with the rebel movement in humanitarian or any other fields.

While SPLA has blatantly shown its disregard to all humanitarian norms and principles by executing the four captives, the Government of the Sudan expresses its deep regret and utter astonishement to the failure of the international community to exercise serious pressure on the rebel movement to release all the capitives, including the Sudanese nationals.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the Sudan has contacted the IGAD and the Secretary General of the United Nations to the effect that they exert pressure on the rebel movement. It was also hoped that the ICRC would put its leverage and the international recognition it enjoys to pressurize the rebels to ensure the safety of the captives and to release them all without discrimination. The inaction of the ICRC, an organization entrusted with safeguarding the principles enshrined in the International Humaniterian Laws and the relevant agreements, led to encourage the rebel movement to commit this heinous crime.

The continued disregard by the International Community to the rebel movement's defiance will have grave consequences on the chances of reaching peace and the realization of stability of humanitarian conditions. In this regard, the Government of the Sudan calls on the international community to condemn this crime. Sudan further demands that the rebel

movement repatriate the bodies of the four Sudanese nationls to allow for a decent burial.

The Government of the Sudan will take all the necessary measures that guarantee the security and the protection of its citizens. The concerned authorities are currently studying and examining the appropriate measures to ensure that such incidents will not be repeated. These measures will be announced later.

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